

us here to say no to efforts to sell Congress to the highest bidder. They sent us here to stand up for what is right. Now they are watching, waiting, and hoping—hoping that we will show some spine and start fighting back when Congress ignores the message of the American people and returns to the old ways of doing business.

Republicans will control this government, but they cannot hand that control over to big corporations unless Democrats roll over and allow them to do so. It is time for Democrats—Democrats and Republicans, who should be ashamed by this kind of corruption—to make it clear exactly who they work for. Does the Senate work for Big Pharma, which hires lobbyists and people who make giant campaign contributions, or does the Senate work for the American people who actually sent us here?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The Senator from Texas.

COMMENTS OF THE SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I confess that I came to the floor to talk about some of the nominations that we are going to see coming from the administration, particularly regarding one of our colleagues, Senator SESSIONS, the Senator from Alabama, to be the next Attorney General.

I am somewhat taken aback by the nature of the comments that I hear coming from the Senator from Massachusetts. I had to refresh my memory of the Senate Standing Rules, which I thought prohibited this sort of ad hominem attack—the claims of corruption, selling legislation for campaign contributions. I thought the rules of decorum of the Senate prohibited that sort of demagoguery.

But I am not sure you can write a rule that would prohibit somebody who is actually determined to defy the very voters they claim to be representing. If our Democratic colleagues like the result of the election that just occurred on November 8, I would say: Keep on keeping on. Keep on with this same sort of ad hominem attacks and attacking the motivation of people, rather than talking about policy.

I thought that is what the Senate was supposed to be all about—not where we come in here and call each other names. It is no wonder that the American people are turned off by what they see as politics as usual. I think what they told us on November 8 is that they actually would like to see us accomplish some things—first of all, starting with listening to them, not telling them what is good for them and saying: Well, if you don't like it, you are going to have to take it because the people in power, the people working in Washington, the elites in America know better than you do what is good for you.

So when I hear the Senator from Massachusetts come in and give essen-

tially a political speech, such as she did, not talking about the merits or the policy but rather making personal attacks against Senators and people who support the policy, I just think this is beneath the dignity of the Senate.

I would hope we would rise to the occasion, in the wake of this historic election and say: You know what, we can do better. The American people deserve better than what they have been getting coming out of Washington. The only way we are going to be able to turn this country around is by, first of all, listening to what the American people are telling us. We know what they said is this: We are not happy with the direction of the country, and we are not happy with what is happening in Washington.

To come in and make the kind of speeches that I just heard a moment ago is disturbing. It is disappointing. We can do better than that. We must do better than that if we are going to regain the confidence of the American people that we are actually worthy of their support as we try to guide this ship of state and try to pass laws that actually will improve the quality of their lives by growing the economy, by making it possible for people to find work who want work so they can provide for their families, to try to make sure that the American people are safe and secure, and to provide for our common defense.

Those are the sorts of things we ought to be focused on. So it is a little distressing to walk into this Chamber, in what used to be known as the world's greatest deliberative body, and to hear the sort of diatribe and the personal attacks and the name calling that we just heard from the Senator from Massachusetts.

ATTORNEY GENERAL NOMINATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the reason I came to the floor is to make note of the fact, as I alluded to a moment ago, that President-Elect Donald Trump announced his intention to nominate one of our own, a Member of the Senate, to be the Nation's top law enforcement officer.

Our friend, the junior Senator from Alabama, Mr. SESSIONS, is undoubtedly qualified and prepared for this role as Attorney General because of the long career he spent protecting and defending our Constitution and the rule of law.

If there is one thing we can do in the U.S. Government to help restore the public's confidence, it will be to re-embrace the concept of equal justice under the law and ensure there is not a double standard by which people are judged—the powerful, the well-connected, and then the rules that apply to everybody else—but, rather, that the same rules apply to all of us. The same laws apply to all of us.

In fact, that is the bulwark of our constitutional democracy. Frankly, I

think the American people have seen, in the last two Attorneys General—the current one and her predecessor, Mr. Holder—is essentially an office of the Department of Justice that was not worthy of the name “Justice.” It should have been called an extension of the White House political operation because so much of the way they conducted themselves was governed not by the rule of law but by political considerations.

Our friend, the Senator from Alabama, understands firsthand the importance of hard work as well. He is the son of a country store owner from Hybart, AL. He received his law degree from the University of Alabama. He served in the U.S. Army Reserves.

As we know, his service didn't stop there. Guided by a sense of duty for the last five decades, JEFF SESSIONS has dedicated his life to the State of Alabama and to the United States itself, first as a Federal prosecutor—including 12 years as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Alabama, then as the State's attorney general, and now in the Senate where he has served with distinction for the last decade-plus.

Above all, JEFF SESSIONS has worked for the people of his State and this country with one purpose in mind; that is, to uphold the rule of law.

His career in the Senate reflects this earnest commitment to do what is right, not what is popular, not what is politically convenient but to do what is right, guided by the Constitution, the laws, and inspired by the people he was elected to serve. He has been a defender of our military families and played a leading role in ensuring that rural communities have the health care they need.

I understand the long knives are already starting to come out against President-Elect Trump's nominees and that Senator SESSIONS—our colleague from Alabama—is not going to be spared some of those attacks, but I would ask some of these critics who don't know his entire record to consider the fact that a few years ago he teamed up with the senior Senator from Illinois to reform sentencing charges on crack cocaine, sentencing charges that disproportionately discriminate against African-American communities.

It was a bipartisan solution that in JEFF's words, “achieve fairness without impeding our ability to combat drug violence.”

I would also ask these critics to consider the bill he introduced with Senator Ted Kennedy, the now-departed “liberal lion of the Senate,” to use grant funding to reduce sexual assaults in prison. The legislation requires the Department of Justice to keep track of these assaults, and it was signed into law by President George W. Bush.

Taken legislatively, these are not the sorts of actions that fit this distorted picture that some of the critics are already starting to draw about Senator SESSIONS and his record in the Senate or his character as a man.

I have had the honor of working closely with JEFF on the Senate Judiciary Committee since I came to the Senate, and I am proud to call him a friend. Those who have watched him day-in and day-out understand his stalwart commitment to the rule of law and his deep and abiding concern for our country.

Of course, we wouldn't be Senators if we didn't sometimes disagree with each other. It is just normal, but Senator SESSIONS has always engaged with seriousness and cordiality and the kind of civility this Chamber and this country could use more of. By the strength of his arguments, he has helped us all to see the weaknesses in our own arguments as he has worked together with his colleagues to try to help us build consensus, which is the only way we get anything done and the way our constitutional system was designed. Only by building consensus can we move our country forward.

We are going to miss Senator SESSIONS in the Senate when he moves on to the executive branch as Attorney General, but it is even more important, at this point in this country's history, to have a champion of the Constitution and the rule of law at the Department of Justice and to help restore the reputation of that Department.

As I said earlier, for years now—during the course of Attorney General Holder's tenure and unfortunately succeeded by Attorney General Lynch—the Department of Justice has twisted the Constitution to further the President's political agenda.

I give just one example. When Congress was performing its legitimate oversight responsibilities into a gun-running operation gone wrong called Fast and Furious, Attorney General Holder was called before the Senate Judiciary Committee, called before our corresponding House committee, and simply defied those committees' lawful and appropriate oversight responsibilities over what the Department of Justice was doing.

To my knowledge, this resulted in his having been the first Attorney General to be held in contempt of Congress—a sitting Attorney General of the United States held in contempt of Congress.

Unfortunately, the Obama administration put politics ahead of our national commitment to the rule of law and too often demonized those who worked to protect us. I have every confidence that Senator SESSIONS, as the Attorney General of the United States, the head of the Department of Justice, and the Trump administration will defend the rule of law and will use his expertise in the Constitution to play an essential role in our President-elect's Cabinet. As a 15-year veteran of the Department, Senator SESSIONS understands better than most what needs to be done to help the Department of Justice refocus its responsibilities and its priorities.

Here is the bottom line. We need people in the highest rungs of our govern-

ment who will ensure our Constitution is preserved, protected, and defended. Senator SESSIONS, as the next Attorney General of the United States, will do just that.

GETTING OUR WORK DONE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, while the President-elect is considering additional nominees to fill his Cabinet, we in the Senate—working together with our House colleagues—have our own responsibilities to fulfill before the end of this year.

Most pressing is legislation to fund the government, something that unfortunately has been hindered by our Democratic colleagues slow-walking the appropriations process. Actually, calling it slow-walking is a little too generous. What they did is block the normal appropriations process, where the 12 separate appropriations bills would be voted out of committee—which they were, on a bipartisan basis—but then they would come across the floor of the Senate where amendments would be offered, and we would actually vote on them before sending them to the President to be signed into law.

Instead of this normal process—which is transparent, it is bipartisan, in the best traditions of the Senate—we were denied the opportunity to do that, resulting now in our need to pass a year-end continuing resolution, kicking the funding of the government over to perhaps sometime in the spring. This was strictly as a result of the gamesmanship of our colleagues, many of them blocking the same appropriations bills they voted for, on a bipartisan basis, before the Appropriations Committee itself.

Despite those obstructions, we have actually tried to do some good work. We passed our first bicameral budget since 2009. As I said, the Appropriations Committee voted out all 12 appropriations bills.

Despite the obstructionism we have seen and despite where we find ourselves, I ask all of us to take stock of where we are, given what we saw happen in the historic election of November 8. I think the American people have made very clear they want the government to function and they don't have a lot of tolerance for gamesmanship or partisanship or obstruction, but we cannot move forward with other substantial legislative goals until we address funding for the remainder of this fiscal year. While I am disappointed we find ourselves where we are today—having to pass another short-term continuing resolution until next March or so—this waiting until the last minute is not a good way to do business. I hope next year, with the new administration and with the leadership of Senator MCCONNELL, Speaker RYAN in the House, and with more cooperation from our Democratic colleagues, we can have a regular and open appropriations process, one that will serve the Amer-

ican people much better. It will certainly serve the interests of the Defense Department and other people who need to be able to plan beyond 2 months or 3 months in terms of what they can do with the money Congress is going to appropriate.

Until then, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to set aside the disputes we have had over the last year and the election itself—which I know some are finding it easier to see the results of the election in the rearview mirror than others, as evidenced by the comments I heard from the Senator from Massachusetts when I came to the floor—but we need to pass a bill that will fund the government and allow us to move forward. I hope we can do that. Then, once we have completed the work for this year, we can come back in the new year with a new administration, a new Congress, and recommit ourselves to doing the people's work and doing it in a consensus-building, bipartisan way that listens to what our constituents are telling us they want, not the siren call of the people who think they know better than they do what is good for them but to listen to the American people and then get about the work of passing legislation which promotes their interests. This is first to assure for the common defense but, secondly, to make sure our economy starts to grow again so people who want to find work or want better paying jobs can find work available so they can provide for their families and pursue their American dream.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows.